

Zero-to-NEWS Three

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The Early Intervention Section of the State Department of Health provides developmental services for any eligible child from birth to three years of age in five areas: physical, cognitive, communication, social or emotional, and adaptive.

Services are available on all islands and there is no cost to families.

For more information, please contact our Hawaii Keiki Information Services System (HKISS) referral and information line at 973-9633 for Oahu and 1-800-235-5477 for Neighbor Islands.

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Getting thru Transition

Transition from early intervention (EI) to a preschool or community program can be a very smooth and successful process with thoughtful planning and active participation from the family, early intervention and preschool staff.

To ensure a smooth and successful transition, the care coordinator (CC) begins the planning process at the initial Individualized Family Support Plan (IFSP) meeting with the family. Early discussions about transition include opportunities for the family to share their hopes and dreams for their child and to know that they will be supported throughout the entire transition process.

At least six months prior to transition, the CC and family will review the transition plan. This would include a discussion about the process as well as further exploration of possible community providers, settings, and resources for their child. Activities and strategies would be identified to prepare the child and family for the next environment. The CC will arrange for a Transition Conference with possible providers so that the family has the opportunity to gather more information and share their hopes and concerns regarding their child's future.

Recently, Kameron Tsue transitioned from the Leeward Early Childhood Services Program to the Pearlridge Elementary Special Education Program. His family's first informal discussion about transition was almost 2 years before Kameron's transition. About eight months before Kameron's actual

transition, his CC began discussions again and Kameron's mom Dawn began looking at preschool programs. One of the goals of transition is to ensure that the services needed by the



child are in place when the child turns three or when they are eligible to start preschool. When Kameron enrolled at

Pearlridge Elementary, he and his parents had already met with the principal, student services coordinator, the special education teacher, his preschool teacher, a vision specialist, and a representative from the Hawaii School for the Deaf and Blind (Hawaii School).

Kameron's transition team included a vision specialist and a representative from the Hawaii School because he was born with Septo Optic



Dysplasia. "His optic nerves didn't fully develop so his

vision is weak. It's hard to tell what he can see. We have to wait—his eyes will continue to develop until he is 5 or 6 years old," explains Kameron's dad, Jonathan.

The Tsue's care coordinator at Leeward arranged a Transition Conference with the Pearlridge staff three months before Kameron's start at preschool. "They were really

(continued on page 3.)

CHAIR'S MESSAGE

by Jennifer Schember-Lang

Some months ago I was given a copy of an article from **Focus on Exceptional Children (February 2000)**



entitled "Working with Families of At-Risk and Special Needs Students: A Systems Change Model." I re-read this article early in this New Year and found that it

provides some reminders when supporting families regardless of the age of the child with special needs.

The article starts with a discussion of parental communication skills. "It is important to help parents learn the communication skills needed to articulate their views and not feel overwhelmed by their team experience." Communication problems can arise because parents are unfamiliar with the procedures employed on teams or

because they have not mastered effective communication skills.

These two sentences might be a focus for attention at any meeting convened to assist and support the family as a 3-year-old with special needs moves from one service system (Early Intervention) to the Department of Education system. Consider, for a moment, the highlighted acronyms or terms below that may be perfectly understandable to some attending a transition meeting, but not to the parent.

*Your child's **EI services** under **Part C of the IDEA** as written on the **IFSP** and provided by an **OT** and **PT** with the assistance and support of your care coordinator, will shift to services provided under **Part B of the IDEA**. **DOE** administrative rules, Title 8, **Chapter 56** and its provisions for identification, evaluation, **IEP** development and placement that will provide **FAPE**. The **IEP team** will utilize information from the **EI system** to determine if your child is **eligible***

*under Chapter 56. If eligible, the **IEP team**, including the parent, will discuss, among other things, **PLEPs**, measurable **annual goals/objectives**, services, and **placement in the LRE**.*

Perhaps the best skill we can encourage and help all parents learn (as well as representatives of any discipline) is the skill to (a) ask questions and, (b) ask the same question again until a response is understandable. As I write this sentence I think of parents or others who might misunderstand the word "discipline" when used as a term to categorize different professionals who work with their child. In another context, "discipline" might point to the behavior of the child or, in a school-level public school context, discipline might refer to a set of administrative rules. How often do we all speak "past" each other instead of to each other? How can parents and professionals work as a team if they don't speak the same language?

(continued on page 4.)



JUST ASK!

Guest Contributor:
Amy Valdez

Dear Amy: My daughter won't be three years old for a while, but I'm still concerned about her transition out of early intervention. What can I do now to help prepare for that change?

--Anxious Mom

Dear Anxious Mom,

It's normal to have feelings of anxiety. Change is not easy. Just remember that transition is a process, not an event.

Share with your care coordinator what your hopes and dreams are for your daughter. Together, develop a transition plan that outlines steps that work toward your transition goals. This plan is part of your Individualized Family Support Plan (IFSP). It's never

too early to start thinking about transition and becoming aware of what to expect. Rest assured that you are not alone in this – your care coordinator will support you through the entire process.

Knowing what your daughter needs, as well as what you desire for her growth and development is important. This will help when you look at how different programs might be able to meet her needs. Research shows us that from age three, learning and playing with same age peers helps young children tremendously to grow and develop. Some options you can explore include Department of Education's (DOE) special education preschool, Head Start, private community preschools, or other programs that are unique to your community (like play groups).

Talk to your care coordinator about arranging your Transition Conference. This should occur at least three months before your daughter is ready to transition to another program. The purpose of the Transition Conference

is to give you an opportunity to learn about different options and how each might meet your daughter's needs. For example, if you are interested in learning about DOE special education preschool, your care coordinator will invite a DOE representative to your Transition Conference. If you are interested in a specific community preschool or Head Start program, representatives from those options will also be invited. It is a wonderful way to meet people and gather information so that you can make confident choices.

Working together is key. The Hawaii STEPS Project, a statewide interagency project that focuses on early childhood transitions, developed a resource called "Steps to Transition" that might be helpful and is available through your care coordinator.

Wishing you a smooth transition...

--Amy

(Amy Valdez is a Hawaii STEPS Team member & the Inclusion Project Coordinator at the Early Intervention Section.)

(Transition--cont. from page 1.)

organized,” commented Kameron’s mother, Dawn. At the meeting, it was determined that Kameron would need an evaluation. Dawn continues, “They scheduled tests that included occupational therapy, educational, functional vision, and an intellectual evaluation.”

Once the evaluations were completed, Kameron’s transition team met again to determine that he should begin instruction in Braille as well as orientation and mobility (using the back of his hand to see where he is going). Jonathan commented, “At Pearlridge Elementary, they have more knowledge of his problem and so they understand what he is doing and they know how to deal with him. At the other program (another daycare program that Kameron attended), they didn’t have other students with vision impairment.”

Like Kameron, another child named Jackson Morris, was also being prepared to transition to preschool from North Hawaii Child Development Program (private provider) on the Big Island. Lani, Jackson’s mom, commented that the transition process went ‘quite smoothly’ because of Jackson’s CC. “We really did not know what to expect. She (Jackson’s CC) made sure she had everything together and started the process about eight months in advance, gearing me

up for the transition prior to Jackson turning three years old.”

Jackson has Trisomy 13 Mosaic. It occurs in about 1 out of every 5,000 live births and it is a syndrome associated with the presence of an extra number 13 chromosome.

The Transition Conference included Jackson’s CC, the Department of



Education (DOE) 619 Preschool Coordinator, and EI. “They let me know what was out there as far as services and I let them know

where we wanted to go with Jackson,” stated Lani. During this time, Lani wondered if Jackson would qualify for special education preschool because he was doing so well. Jackson did qualify for special education because he still needed to work on speech and language. However, Lani thought Jackson should be placed in a community preschool with typically developing children to best support his overall development. She felt Jackson would thrive better in a regular preschool program with supports.

The DOE 619 Preschool Coordinator for the island of Hawaii worked with a community preschool and arranged a 1-year pilot project that



required much collaborative planning. The community preschool would implement the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) and DOE would provide special education consultant services and the related services of occupational, speech and physical therapy.

As Lani describes Jackson’s preschool, “They are warm, friendly, and eager to work with Jackson.” Adds Lani, “What was so incredible about the transition process was the fact that they listened to us. They heard our concerns and were willing to go the extra mile to do what, we felt, was best for Jackson.”

Merci! Grazie! Arigato!



Many thanks to the folks that donated goods and services to assist the Early Intervention Section increase public awareness about its services.

For those of you who may have noticed, the Early Intervention Section (EIS) and Dear Family brochures have a new look! Local graphic artist Todd Masui of www.subtly.com donated much time and expertise to assist us in our new look. Look for our new Hawaii Keiki Information Service System (H-KISS) brochure that will be debuting soon.

Another big Mahalo goes to James LeVine of Childhood Resources, Inc. for donating booth space at the Keiki Resources Fair 2004.



Wal-Mart donated small giveaways (stickers) for EIS to distribute at the



fair. Mahalo to Wal-Mart staffers Marie Ladeira and Teresa Trovillo who were very helpful in the process.

Randy’s World by Randy Compton



(Chair's Message--cont. from page 2.)

The article also speaks to the need, desire, and availability of family members to be involved in the education of the "at-risk or special needs learner." Some parents might want to be more involved than their schedules and responsibilities allow. Other parents might not be interested, regardless of other responsibilities.

School personnel should encourage family involvement while also recognizing that there are a variety of reasons for limited participation or non-participation. Lack of parental participation might be related to specific child and family characteristics, parental anxiety (parents at the mercy of experts), parents worried that they might appear uninformed, confused or indecisive, parents who feel they have failed their child, parental mistrust, concern and doubt about the competence of professionals, concern that their child might be seen negatively by others if involved in the special education system, parental

guilt, or prior negative experience with schools (or systems).

Family systems concepts and approaches are complex but worth the effort to understand. All of us can learn more. Let's start the year with a recommitment to do just that for all children with special needs and their families.

LEARN About EI

Currently the Early Intervention Section is providing an "Early Intervention Orientation." The Orientation is three days and covers the following topics:

Day 1: History, Law, Eligibility, Early Intervention Services and Programs, Referral Process, Family-Centered Care, Cultural Sensitivity, Communication, Procedural Safeguards, Felix Consent Decree.

Day 2: Care Coordination, Home Visiting Skills, Safety/Boundary Setting, Individualized Family Support Plan (IFSP) Process, Natural Environments.

Day 3: Teaming, Transdisciplinary Approach, and Transition.

The trainings are open to early intervention service providers, family members, and physicians statewide. If you are interested in attending or would like more information, please call Stacy Kong at 973-1112 or e-mail stacy.kong@fhds.health.state.hi.us

SPIN Sign-Up

The Special Parent Information Network's (SPIN) Annual Conference, "Take A SPIN Through Hollywood", will be on Saturday, April 24, 2004, from 8:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m. at the University of Hawaii Campus Center. SPIN invites you to "Go on the Walk of Fame through helpful workshops, star quality speakers, dazzling displays and much more!" For more information call 586-8126, email: accesshi@aloha.net or check website: www.spinhawaii.org.

EIS will cover registration costs for families whose child is receiving early intervention services as well as early intervention staff. Please contact your Care Coordinator for more information, call Stacy Kong at 973-1112, or e-mail stacy.kong@fhds.health.state.hi.us.



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